

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1295

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG KS KN
SUBJ: ROKG THINKING ON UN AND NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE

REF: SEOUL 1239 (DTG 140832Z FEB 78)

1. UN DIVISION DIRECTOR YI CHONG-PIN OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, FEBRUARY 15 DISCUSSED WITH EMBOFF RECENT REPORTS OF ROKG INTEREST IN UN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION. YI SAID ROK IS AWARE THAT ANY FAVORABLE VOTE ON ROK UN MEMBERSHIP WOULD ENCOUNTER SOVIET AND PRC VETO, BUT IN VIEW OF ROK'S IMPROVED DIPLOMATIC POSITION, THEY FEEL THEY MUST AT LEAST CHECK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A FAVORABLE VOTE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. A STRONG MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF THE ROK WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC IMPORTANCE IN PRESSING THE NORTH TO RESUME CONTACT.

2. YI HIMSELF WAS SKEPTICAL OF ANY SUCH ACTUAL RESULT, OBSERVING THAT MANY COUNTRIES TEND TO MAKE FRIENDLY COMMENTS IN PRIVATE WHILE THEY ARE UNWILLING TO STAND
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UP AND BE COUNTED IN A VOTE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT OF SOME 85 NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, ABOUT 35 HAVE RELATIONS WITH BOTH KOREAS, 30 HAVE RELATIONS ONLY WITH THE NORTH AND 15 ONLY WITH THE SOUTH. HE FOUND THIS AN INAUSPICIOUS RATIO.

3. YI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE ABSENCE OF A UN DEBATE

MAKES BILATERAL RELATIONS EASIER, AND THAT NO ONE IN THE UN WANTS TO HAVE THE KOREAN QUESTION RAISED. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ROK CANNOT LEAVE THE INITIATIVE TO THE NORTH, AND THAT IT MUST MAKE SOME RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT NORTH KOREAN EFFORTS, PARTICULARLY THE FEBRUARY FIRST MEMORANDUM.

4. YI COMMENTED, AS HE HAD BEFORE, THAT ROK FEELS DEVELOPMENTS AT NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS IN KABUL AND BELGRADE WILL PROVIDE USEFUL INDICATIONS OF NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS FOR THE UNGA THIS FALL. HE SAID THE ROK FEELS THE OPTIMAL OUTCOME FOR THE NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS WOULD BE

THE ABSENCE OF ANY KOREAN ITEM. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE IN THE PAST AND THAT NORMALLY ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED WAS FOR TWO OR THREE COUNTRIES TO SUPPORT AN ITEM STRONGLY. HE SPECULATED THAT IF ANOTHER ONE OR TWO COUNTRIES WERE VEHEMENT IN OPPOSITION, THAT MIGHT BLOCK THE ITEM, ALTHOUGH HE WAS UNWILLING TO PREDICT WHETHER THE ROK WOULD BE ABLE TO DEVELOP THAT KIND OF SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT HAS TO WORK FROM OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION. HE OBSERVED, IN PASSING, THAT THE KOREANS HAVE FOUND THEIR ASIAN NEIGHBORS AMONG THE LEAST RELIABLE IN THIS REGARD, SINCE THEY MAKE ENCOURAGING SOUNDS BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE, UNDER PRESSURE

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OF THEIR "SPECIAL SITUATION", REMAIN SILENT. THE LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE OFTEN PROVED TO BE MORE DEPENDABLE. YI ONCE AGAIN NOTED THE IMPORTANCE FOR THE ROKG OF BEING SURE THAT PYONGYANG DOES NOT GAIN ITS POINTS THROUGH DEFAULT, BUT DECLINED TO SAY JUST HOW THE ROK WOULD PROCEED.

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